

Testimony Submitted to the
Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education
Public Hearing
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My husband and I were born and raised in New York City. In 2002, we relocated to Connecticut to raise our daughter. When our daughter turned 3, I started my search for schools. I came across the magnet school website and decided to apply. At that time, we lived in West Hartford and selected the University of Hartford Magnet School (UHMS) as our number one choice. Unfortunately, she didn't make it into their pre-k program but I kept applying until she was finally accepted in Kindergarten. I was very impressed with the education my daughter was receiving. She was reading at the age of 5, counting to 100 and learning all the necessary steps to become an enlightened student.

After her first year at UHMS we moved to Canton. We live across the street from their schools and although it's convenient, we didn't feel the urge to switch. We felt Canton wasn't the right fit and that our daughter would have been considered a minority. We decided to keep her at UHMS, where we felt was a better environment. Although it required us to drive for half an hour, we didn't mind because we knew she was in place filled with diversity.

My daughter accomplished a lot at UHMS. She was voted the president for her school council, she managed to maintain good grades and most importantly she discovered her love for music.

We were happy to learn that students who already attended the magnet schools would have a pathway to attend the magnet middle schools and high schools. My daughter wanted to attend the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts middle school. At first we were skeptical of sending her since the school was new. They asked her to shadow a student for the day to see if she liked it. Afterwards, we attended their open house and were captivated with their curriculum. We loved how they incorporated the arts program with their academic schedule. We knew this would be the right school for her.

My youngest daughter now attends UHMS. It was nice to send her to a familiar place where her sister was. She quickly adapted to the school and is doing amazing!

The magnet schools not only offer a diverse community but a remarkable education. They offer great programs such as extended day which is helpful to the working family. They offer siblings to attend the program due to seniority. They offer meetings and open houses for parents to learn about the different schools and what each one has to offer. But it doesn't stop there, all teachers and staff become like family. It's nice to feel a sense of security when sending your kids to school.

Being raised in a large, ethnical diverse city like New York, we knew we wanted the same for our children. I hope they continue to support the magnet schools because programs like this are necessary for our youth today and for the future.

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